



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423

Office of Economics, Environmental Analysis and Administration

November 18, 2003

Ms. Sandra L. Brown
Troutman Sanders LLP
401 9th Street, NW
Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20004-2134

Re: STB Finance Docket 34435, Ameren ERC, Inc. - Construction and Operation
Exemption - In Montgomery County, Illinois

Dear Ms. Brown:

Pursuant to 49 CFR 1105.10(c), we are granting your request of November 3, 2003 for a waiver of the six-month prefiling notice generally required for construction projects under 49 CFR 1105.10(a)(1).

The Surface Transportation Board's (Board) Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) met with you and John Molm of Troutman Sanders LLP and Glennon Hof of Ameren Energy Fuels & Service (representing Ameren ERC, Inc. or applicant) on October 7, 2003. At the meeting, it was explained that Ameren ERC would seek authority from the Board to construct and operate an approximately 12.5-mile rail line to connect the Coffeen Power Plant near Coffeen, Illinois (IL) with a rail line of the Union Pacific Railroad Company (UP) and a rail line of the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF). The proposed rail line would be located entirely within the Montgomery County, IL, and the UP and BNSF connections would both be located near Walshville, IL.

You and Mr. Hof explained that the proposed route would largely parallel the rights-of-way of an existing power transmission line and a Norfolk Southern Railway Company rail line. By building adjacent to existing corridors, the applicant expects the proposed routing to minimize construction impacts and mitigate harm to local farmers. Based on data reviewed by the applicant and its contractors, the applicant also believes this route would minimize rail line length, avoid road crossings, increase distances to sensitive receptors, such as residences and schools, and minimize impacts to sensitive resources, such as wetlands and waterways.

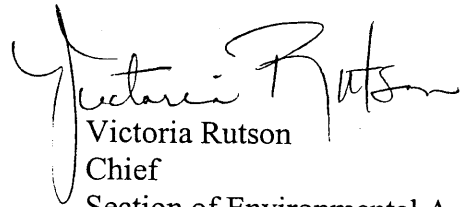
In addition to this proposed route, an alternative route that would require only five miles of new rail line construction and the use of an existing rail line was also discussed at the meeting. The existing rail line, however, would need to be purchased from another rail carrier.

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At the October 7, 2003 meeting, SEA also provided a general overview of the Board's environmental review process, SEA's role in the process, and the use of third-party consultants.

Based on the information from this initial meeting, SEA believes that it has adequate information and the applicant is sufficiently aware of the environmental process to grant this request. If we can be of further assistance, please contact Dave Navecky of my staff at 202-565-1593.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Rutson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Victoria" and last name "Rutson" clearly distinguishable.

Victoria Rutson
Chief
Section of Environmental Analysis